

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 CPR-01 OC-06 CCO-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DHA-02 SY-05 OPR-02 A-01 IO-13

PC-01 AID-05 PER-01 SS-15 NSC-05 MCT-01 /081 W

-----251556Z 038058 /65

R 251331Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9298

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0181

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC PFOR PINS DM US

SUBJ: BENIN COUP ATTEMPT: WELFARE OF AMCITS

REF: A LAGOS 772 B STATE 14220 C LOME 190(NOT SENT NIAMEY)

D STATE 15421

1. NEITHER EMBASSY COTONOU NOR DAVIS FAVORS HIS WITHDRAWAL
BEFORE COMPLETION HIS TDY HERE.

2. FRENCH AMBASSADOR, AS DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN COTONOU,
MONDAY DEPOSITED AN AIDE-MEMOIRE WITH MFA PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT
CALLING ON THEM TO: A) EXPEDITE RE-CONNECTION OF EMBASSIES'
PHONES DISCONNECTED SUNDAY NOON(JAN16) B) ISSUE STICKERS
WHICH CAN BE AFFIXED TO DIPLOMATS DOOR TO AVOID SEARCHES,
C) ISSUE A SPECIAL LAISSEZ-PASSER TO DIPLOMATS BECAUSE
MFA-ISSUED DIP I.D. CARD DOES NOT PREVENT ROAD-BLOCK
STOPS AND SEARCHES AT THE PRESENT TIME, D) ORGANIZE A
CONVOY OF AUTO-DRIVING TOURISTS OUT OF BENIN, AND E)
REMIND MFA THAT VIENNA CONVENTION CALLS FOR CONSULAR
AGENT TO HAVE ACCESS TO CITIZENS OF SENDING STATE, AND THAT
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SUCH CITIZENS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTACT THEIR CONSULAR
REPRESENTATIVE. THE AIDE-MEMOIRE MADE NO MENTION OF A
PROTEST OVER THE DETENTION OF CRO DAVIS OR ANY OTHER DIPLOMATS.

3. I THEREFORE SENT A NOTE TO FRENCH AMB SAYING THAT MY
INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO SUPPORT SUCH A PROTEST ON HIS PART. HE
INVITED ME TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER TUESDAY MORNING, JAN 25,

AT WHICH TIME HE EXPAINED THAT HE AGREED WITH MFA THAT THIS WAS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TIME FOR THEM, THAT THEY HAD NO CLOUT WITH THE SECURITY FORCES, AND THAT DAVIS' ARRIVAL HAD NEVER BEEN ANNOUNCED TO MFA SO THERE WAS LITTLE THEY COULD DO. FRENCH AMB FINISHED BY SAYING THAT DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL APOLOGIZED FOR DIFFICULTIES CAUSED ALL DIPLOMATS AND EMBASSIES IN COTONOU. I REPLIED THAT AN OFFICIAL PROTEST SEEMED IN ORDER AT LEAST FOR THE DETENTION OF TWO FRENCH DIPLOMATS AND OUR THIRD SECRETARY, AND THAT I WOULD LIKE HIM TO INCLUDE DAVIS CASE IN SUCH A PROTEST IF HE COULD.

4. AMB THEN SAID HE HAD MADE A PROTEST OVER ALL DETENTIONS "FROM DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS," BUT NOT FROM ENTIRE CORPS AS HE WAS SURE HE COULD NOT GET THEIR TOTAL AGREEMENT. I ACCEPTED THIS AS FULFILLING THE LETTER OF MY INSTRUCTIONS. REF B.

5. POST WILL WAITING DETAILS OF BRANUM DETENTION MENTIONED REF C, BUT SUSPECT THAT FORMAL PROTEST THIS MATTER WOULD HAVE LITTLE UTILITY AS IT APPEARS AT THIS TIME THAT ALL FOREIGNERS IN BENIN HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AT LEAST ONCE AND MANY OUTSIDE COTONOU ARE RIGHT NOW CONFINED TO QUARTERS OR TOWN IN WHICH THEY LOCATED. (FYI, JUDGING FROM SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION, IT APPEARS MINISTRY OF INTERIOR MIGHT HAVE INSTRUCTED ALL DISTRICT OFFICIALS TO "PROTECT FOREIGNERS," AND THEY HAVE DECIDED EASIEST METHOD IS KEEP THEM CLOSE TO HOME.) UNLESS BRANUM'S TREATMENT PARTICULARLY EGREGIOUS, THEREFORE, OR DEPARTMENT WISHES OTHERWISE, WE WILL NOT PROTEST HIS DETENTION.

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6. ONLY INFORMATION WE HAVE ON BLEDSOES (AND JONES FAMILY, WHICH IS WITH SAME MISSION IN NATITINGOU) REF C, IS THAT ALL FOREIGNERS IN THAT CITY ARE SAFE BUT (AGAIN) CONFINED TO QUARTERS. THIS CAME FROM BRITISH NATIONAL WHO LIVES THERE AND TO WHOM UN OFFICIAL TALKED ON PHONE JAN 24. WE TRYING TO CONFIRM DEFINATELY THAT THIS INCLUDES ALL PCV'S IN AREA ALONG WITH BLEDSOES AND JONES; WILL CONFIRM WHEN KNOWN.

7. PER COTONOU 164, MINIMIZE CAN BE LIFTED. LA SOR

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NNN

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